

## Coordinating Child Care and Development Fund and 21st Century Community Learning Center Services

Two of the largest federal funding streams that support access to quality school-age opportunities are the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program. Both federal programs have a common goal—to support safe places for school-age children to spend time before and after school and during the summer months. However, they differ in eligibility requirements, how funds are distributed and how States, Territories and local governments can use these funds.

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) first enacted by Congress in 1990 and amended in 1996, and 2014. The recently approved Act represents an historic re-envisioning of the program. The new law makes significant advancements by defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining eligibility policies, expanding quality improvement efforts, and ensuring parents and the public have transparent information about the child care choices available to them. (Office of Child Care Fact Sheet, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/fact-sheet-occ>)

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Formula grants are awarded to State educational agencies (SEAs), which in turn manage statewide competitions and award grants to eligible entities. For this program, eligible entity means a local educational agency, community-based organization, another public or private entity, or a consortium of two or more of such agencies, organizations, or entities.

States must give priority to applications that are jointly submitted by a local educational agency and a community-based organization or other public or private entity. For more information, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>. The table below provides a side-by-side comparison of the key elements of these two federal programs.

	<b>21st Century Community Learning Centers</b>	<b>Child Care and Development Fund</b>
<b>Flow of Funds</b>	Federal formula grants to States, who distribute funds to schools, community-based and/or faith-based organizations through a competitive grant process.	Federal block grant to States, Territories and Tribes. Targeted dollars for infant-toddler and enhancing the quality of child care and the workforce.
<b>Program Requirements</b>	Programs must provide academic enrichment in the areas of math, literacy and science; and meet the relevant safety and licensing requirements.	Programs must meet requirements of the 2014 CCDBG Act and as further defined in the State or Territory CCDF Plan.
<b>Goal of Program</b>	Supports the creation of community learning centers or extended learning programs that provide academic enrichment during non-school hours for students that attend high-poverty schools.	Program supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and out-of-school time programs for children up to 13 years.

<b>Program Administration</b>	Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), U.S. Department of Education	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Child Care
<b>Funding Amounts</b>	In FY 2014, \$1.149 billion total appropriation to 11,040 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC programs across the country. (Afterschool Alliance March 2015 fact sheet on 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC) <a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-21stCCLC.cfm">http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-21stCCLC.cfm</a>	In FY 2014, \$5.3 billion, the primary source of federal funding for child care subsidies for low-income working families, serving over 600,000 school-age children. <a href="https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/national-snapshot-federal-supports-afterschool-and-summer-care">https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/national-snapshot-federal-supports-afterschool-and-summer-care</a>

## BACKGROUND ON 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program began as a discretionary grant program in the 1990s, and was converted to a State formula grant program. Congress gave the program a clear charge to provide support to students struggling to meet performance standards in their schools. Programs funded must serve children from underperforming and low-income schools and must provide additional academic support in literacy, math and science. Congress reauthorized 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC in 2015.

The 2015 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC reauthorization included “meaningful consultation,” a provision that includes afterschool allies, such as statewide afterschool networks, among those consulted at the State level regarding program requirements and at the local level regarding proposal development. “Networks might offer input on eligibility criteria, competitive priorities, quality, professional development, outcomes measurement, etc.” The reauthorization also increased the percentage of funding that can be set aside by the SEA for training and technical assistance, “so there may be additional opportunities for networks and intermediaries to help support SEAs in the provision of training and technical assistance.” (Afterschool Alliance, <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyFederal.cfm>)

## State Implementation

States receive an annual allocation through a formula which considers the number of children eligible for Title I services in their State each year, with a minimum allocation for States with fewer school-age children. States distribute funds through a competitive process.<sup>1</sup> Grants may last three to five years and must be for a minimum of \$50,000 each year. There is no maximum grant amount.

Since each State has significant flexibility with these funds, some States align this grant with State education priorities or afterschool quality improvement efforts. For example:

- In Vermont—the 21st CCLC program funds the State Afterschool Network for most of their professional development trainings.
- In New Hampshire, each program is required to go through the Continuous Improvement Process for Afterschool (CIPAS). Family Engagement is also a new priority incorporated into the Request for Proposal (RFP) and state monitoring tool.

## **Opportunities to Coordinate 21CCLC and CCDF**

State leaders continue to explore strategies for combining use of CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding streams for school age children at the program and State level. Several factors drive these efforts to combine and align CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. States may be concerned about sustaining the programs funded by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC dollars because these funds are generally intended to be a short-term source of funding for the startup or expansion of afterschool and summer learning programs. States award grants for a period of three to five years, and while continuation grants can be made, some states will commit these funds to a particular program only once. Consequently, many programs that receive 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds must seek other

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about eligibility, visit: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/eligibility.html>

resources to sustain programs long-term, and CCDF funds offer a potential source to diversify funding.

In addition, increasing children's access to quality programs and facilitating parental choice is a key focus of the CCDF program. Sustaining new afterschool programs originally funded with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, especially those in low-income neighborhoods, is a way to expand opportunities and choices for CCDF families. Coordination between the CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs also holds the promise of improving program quality, as both programs offer resources for technical assistance and quality improvement. Further, if braided, these sources can go further to enhance the quality of child care services to children in after school programs as quality improvement resources cover the costs associated with enhancements.

Finally, many states are looking for ways to make better use of all resources. A growing number of states are, therefore, undertaking initiatives to build a coordinated system of programs and supports for students during non-school hours. By coordinating and aligning the two largest funding sources, CCDF and 21CCLC, some states may find ways to maximize and sustain supports and services to school-age children and their families.

### Challenges to Coordination

State and local leaders may experience challenges to coordinating these two funding streams, due to the different program goals, eligibility requirements, and administrative processes of each funding stream. In a 2010 focus group<sup>2</sup>, stakeholders from both programs identified the following challenges to effective coordination of the funding streams:

- **Funding streams are often administered by different State agencies.** This necessitates regular communication to coordinate policies and practices to ensure

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<sup>2</sup> A focus group comprised of CCDF administrators, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC administrators, and State network staff was facilitated by The Finance Project at the Statewide Afterschool Network of Networks meeting, hosted by the C.S. Mott Foundation, in January, 2010.

funding goals are aligned where possible. Even where the same agency administers CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, the programs are often in different programmatic divisions.

- **21st CCLC programs may not be licensed.** In some States, school-based programs are regulated by the Department of Education and may be exempt from child care licensing requirements. In these cases, State education agencies and State CCDF administrators can work cooperatively to pursue legislative rulemaking or other policy strategies to allow school-based programs to receive child care subsidies.
- **A majority of 21st CCLC programs do not charge participation fees.** In fact, many programs prefer not to charge any fee for participation. While 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs may charge fees, typically on a sliding scale to ensure no child is turned away, focus group participants noted that in many programs and some States, there is a prevailing opinion that these programs should not charge participation fees. CCDF typically operates as a subsidy program to support low-income working parents, and parents pay co-pays based on their income. These differences in payment structures could create an administrative challenge for coordinating the two funding streams and serving families seamlessly.

### Promising Examples of Coordination

Despite some barriers and challenges, there are examples of State level coordination of CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. States are actively engaged in improving the quality of school-age and out-of-school time programs using these two federal funding programs, often collaborating with key State partners. For example, CCDF Funds and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Funds have been used to:

- **Create Collaborative Development of Professional Development Systems.** In several States, notably Florida, New Hampshire, and Ohio, CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC administrators jointly funded the collaborative development of elements of professional development systems, such as core competencies for afterschool educators, program standards, and program assessments.
- **Ensure equitable access to programs.** In New York, the Division of Children and Family Services has worked across agencies to review State and federal programs that

support afterschool and summer learning activities to ensure broad geographic distribution of available funds and balanced access to programs.

- **Braid funds.** In West Virginia, school-age care providers successfully support children in their programs using both CCDF and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds.

## CONCLUSION

While some States have succeeded in collaboratively funding programs with these federal funds, differing eligibility requirements and program cultures means that state and local leaders may need to work collaboratively to address coordination challenges. Through communication about program goals and efforts to build relationships, States have the opportunity to collaborate for the benefit of school-age children and their families.

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